#Grounds4Nature BioBlitz (4-11th June 2020)
Seek and discover the wildlife in your garden or school grounds

In 2019, we ran the first UK-wide #Grounds4Nature Schools' BioBlitz; it was such fun that we intended to do it again. Now, with many schools affected by COVID-19, we have two ways for children to take part: (1) at school with their teachers, or (2) at home with family in their garden.

What? 'Bio' means 'life' and 'Blitz' means 'to do something quickly' – we are asking you to spend an hour or two searching for as many different types of wild plants and animals (not pets, people or planted flowers!) **When?** 4th - 11th June 2020 **Where?** Your garden or any safe private outside space, where you can follow the COVID-19 safety restrictions (e.g. yard, balcony, school grounds). **How?** Use the free App **Seek by iNaturalist** and look at and on flowers, bushes and trees, under stones, in leaf litter, on walls, in your grass - everywhere!

Why take part?
We are running this cross-curricular event for two main reasons:
- Research shows that connecting children with nature is an excellent way to boost their mental and physical wellbeing, alongside their engagement with the science in their school curriculum.
- With many species in decline, we encourage you to engage in a fun and meaningful way with local wildlife.

Taking part is as simple as 1, 2, 3
1) Record wildlife you see in your garden (follow "Quickstart Guide" on the next page below).
2) Tell us about the area you searched, using this quick online form: https://bit.ly/2QUD1ry
3) Tell us about your BioBlitz experience, using this quick online form: https://bit.ly/2wBwn2x

How to safely (and successfully!) search for wildlife
- **Essential equipment:** phone / tablet with Seek by iNaturalist App (only one device is needed per group). **Optional equipment:** clipboards, pencils, magnifiers, lidded clear containers or trays to hold species.
- Search grassy areas for insects and plants like daisies and clover.
- Carefully check flowers for visiting insects collecting pollen/nectar (bees, wasps and butterflies).
- When looking at trees, record what's growing on them, such as moss and lichen.
- Gently tap flowers and leaves with a pencil to dislodge small insects onto a white sheet of paper.
- Search through leaf litter, look under stones and logs for invertebrates and other creatures, but make sure to put them back where you found them – that is somebody's home.
- If you have a pond, you can try pond dipping! This guide will help you out: https://bit.ly/38NqjRg
- If you can, look in your garden at night (out of the window!) to see if there are any night-time visitors such as hedgehogs, foxes and badgers. You can also look on your windows for moths.
- If you have a moth trap or camera trap, set them up to see what you get over a night.
- Remember, when you first start looking you won't be able to see much but as you gradually look more carefully, you will see more and more.
- **Most importantly, have fun discovering the wildlife you have at home!**

Quickstart Guide

On a computer Visit https://www.inaturalist.org/**:**
- Click "sign-up" and follow the instructions to **create a free iNaturalist account.** *Tick box saying: "Yes, license my photos, sounds & observations so scientists can use my data".*
- **Send your username to R.White2@brighton.ac.uk**, so that you can be added to the project.
- You can visit https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/grounds-4-nature-2020 to view and compare your sightings with other participants.

Choose which device you are going to use (not everyone needs their own device)

Apple iPhone or iPad:
Visit App store and download Seek by iNaturalist

Android phone or tablet:
Visit Google Play and download Seek by iNaturalist

- Open Seek on your device
- When *'Log in with iNaturalist account'* comes up, click that option
- Enter your username and password, then press continue
- Click *'allow Seek to use location whilst using App'*, press continue and *'allow Seek to use your photos and camera'*

You are now ready to use Seek in your garden to identify wildlife!
- Open **Seek**, find something to identify, and click the camera symbol.
- Adjust your view until you light up as many green dots as possible (max 7).
- Take a photo - if your photo is not good, e.g. blurry, take another one.

WiFi or 4G available outside
- Post your photo to iNaturalist - this option will appear on your screen.
- Check for correct date, location and that Geoprivacy is open.
- Press *'Post to iNaturalist'*.

No outdoor WiFi or internet signal
- Indoors, open Seek, click the camera symbol, then click the photos option.
- Choose a photo to upload
- Click *'identify photo'* and then *'Post to iNaturalist'*. Check for correct date, location and that Geoprivacy is open.

Tips for taking a good photo using your phone / tablet
- Stand close enough to see subject clearly, but not too close that it's blurry.
- For insects or other invertebrates, put the specimen in a small container to photograph.
- Make sure the subject fills the frame of the photo
- If your photo has more than one organism in it (e.g. a ladybird on a plant) please record this as two separate observation records.
- Using a ruler in your photo will help provide scale.

Questions & Answers:

What if we can't identify something ourselves? Seek will help you with this on- and offline. If you aren't able to highlight many green lights, still post your photo and the online iNaturalist community will help with identification.

If we see one robin, should we record that and move on or take as many photos of robins as we see. A BioBlitz aims to see how many different species there are in an area at a certain time, so once you have recorded a species, move on to another one.

What about sightings we can't photograph? For sightings you make that you can't easily get a photo of such as birds, night-time wildlife, or wildlife that you can't safely reach, please make a note and send the list, along with your iNaturalist username, to Deborah **d.harvey@rhul.ac.uk**

Don't forget you can search for & record: **Plants** (trees, shrubs, flowers), **Invertebrates** (insects, worms, spiders, slugs and snails), **Fungi / toadstools, Lichen, Mammals, Birds, Reptiles, Amphibians and Fish.**

Your results and those of other participants can be viewed here:
https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/grounds-4-nature-2020

Here you can see:
- Recent and total number of observations and species, including a map.
- Leader-boards for "most observations", "most species", & "most observed species". By clicking on "see yours", you can see how you are doing compared to others (as long as you are signed-into your iNaturalist account - check top right of the screen).
- No personal details are shared.

Have fun! If you have any questions at any time about the BioBlitz, please do email the event organisers:

Dr Deborah Harvey: Senior Research Fellow in Biological Sciences; Royal Holloway, University of London. d.harvey@rhul.ac.uk

Dr Rachel White: Senior Lecturer in Ecology & Conservation, University of Brighton. r.white2@brighton.ac.uk

Seek by iNaturalist Guidelines: http://static.inaturalist.org/wiki_page_attachments/SeekUserGuide2020.pdf

Please put your personal safety first at all times during your BioBlitz. Royal Holloway University of London and University of Brighton accept no responsibility for injuries or damage occurring to people or property during this activity.